

Attorney Docket No. P12916

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS**1.) Claim Amendments**

The Applicant has amended claims 20 and claims 28 through 35. Claim 38 has been canceled without prejudice. Accordingly, claims 20 through 37 are pending in the application. Favorable reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

2.) Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 112

The Examiner rejected claim 35 under 35 U.S.C. § 112 as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. The Applicant has amended the claim to more particularly point out and claim the invention. The Examiner's consideration of the amended claim is respectfully requested.

3.) Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

The Examiner rejected claims 20-23, 25, 26 and 28-35 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Kainulainen (US 5,796,793). The Applicant has amended the claims to clarify the claimed invention. Examiner's consideration of the amended claims is respectfully requested.

For instance, amended claim 20 states:

20. A method of synchronizing nodes of a telecommunication network in which a master node is coupled to a Primary Reference Clock (PRC) and a plurality of slave nodes are arranged to synchronize their internal clocks to the PRC using data received on incoming data links, the method comprising:

propagating Synchronization Status Messages through the network from the master node, with each node through which a Message passes incorporating into the Message its own identity, thereby generating in each Message a path which has been followed by the Message;

introducing *an additional delay* in the propagation of the Messages at at least certain of the network nodes; and

for each of at least some of the incoming links of each node, registering a path or path length of a Synchronization Status Message received on that link as an attribute for that link.

Amendment - PAGE 8 of 11
EUS/JJP/04-8748

Attorney Docket No. P12916

It appears that the Examiner is interpreting "delay" to be a normal processing delay associated with processing of the messages by the slave nodes. In other words, the delay associated with the propagating step of claim 20. However, "introducing a delay in the propagation of the Messages at at least certain of the network nodes" is an additional step. To eliminate any confusion, the Applicant has amended the claim language to indicate that the step of introducing the delay is in addition to the processing delay associated with formulating messages. Such a concept is not taught nor implied by Kainulainen. In fact, Kainulainen states:

The central idea of the invention is to copy the changed synchronization signature received from the neighboring node to immediately apply also to the other interfaces connected to the node and used for synchronization.

Kainulainen, col. 3, lines 1-4

Thus, Kainulainen appears to teach against imposing an additional delay into the synchronization process.

Because all of the elements of claim 20 are not taught nor implied by Kainulainen, the Applicant believes claim 20 is in a condition for allowance. Independent claims 32, 33, 34 and 35 have been amended in a similar manner. Thus, they are allowable for the same reasons that claim 20 is allowable.

Claims 20-31 depend from amended claim 20 and recite further limitations in combination with the novel elements of claim 20. Therefore, the allowance of claims 20-31 is also respectfully requested.

The Examiner rejected claims 36-38 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Takalsky (US 5,875,179). Solely in order to expedite the process of this Application, the Applicant has canceled claim 38 without prejudice. This rejection with respect to claim 38, therefore, is deemed to be moot. With respect to claims 36 and 37, however, the Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection and requests reconsideration of these claims.

For instance, claim 36 states:

Amendment - PAGE 9 of 11
EUS/J/P/04-8748

36. A method of synchronizing a node of a telecommunication network in which a master node is coupled to a Primary Reference Clock (PRC) and a plurality of slave nodes are arranged to synchronize their internal clocks to the PRC using data received on incoming data links, the method comprising:

- sending a Synchronization Status Message Request from a node requesting to be synchronized to neighboring nodes in the network;

- returning Synchronization Status Messages from the neighboring nodes to the requesting node, each Message including a path which has been followed by the Message from the master node;

- synchronizing the requesting node on the incoming link over which the Message having a shortest path was received;

- extending the path of the Message having the shortest path to include a identity the requesting node; and

- propagating the Synchronization Status Message having the extended path to at least one of the neighboring nodes.

In contrast, Tikalsky appears to pass along the "path depth" as a integer (Tikalsky, col. 4, lines 24-34). Tikalsky also appears to teach that an identification code can be passed as a parameter (Tikalsky, col. 11, line 36). However, the Applicant could find nothing in Tikalsky which indicates that Tikalsky passes the actual communication path as a parameter.

As indicated on page 10 of the present Application: "Figure 2 illustrates using dashed lines a so-called 'directed loop' which might arise when Node D is connected to Node E and Node E is connected back to Node B. In this situation, an SSM propagated from Node E to Node B will include a path. Node B will find that its own identity is contained in the path and hence will detect a directed loop." Tikalsky, on the other hand, has no ability to detect a directed loop because Tikalsky does not teach the ability to pass the entire path on as a parameter.

Thus, Tikalsky does not teach all of the elements of claim 36. A §102 rejection, therefore, is not proper. The Applicant respectfully requests that this rejection be withdrawn. Similarly, claim 37 is also allowable for the same reasons that claim 36 is allowable.

Attorney Docket No. P12916

4.) Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a)

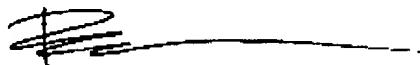
The Examiner rejected claims 24 and 27 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kainulainen in view of Tikalsky. As provided in MPEP § 2143, "[t]o establish a prima facie case of obviousness, ... the prior art reference (or references when combined) must teach or suggest all the claim limitations." Furthermore, under MPEP § 2142, "[i]f the examiner does not produce a prima facie case, the applicant is under no obligation to submit evidence of nonobviousness." However, as discussed above, amended claim 20 contains elements which are not found in Kainulainen. It is submitted that Tikalsky does not provide the missing claim limitations to amended claim 20. Claims 24 and 27, because they depend on claim 20, contain elements which are not found in Kainulainen nor Tikalsky. Therefore, the allowance of claims 24 and 27 is also respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing remarks, the Applicant believes all of the claims currently pending in the Application to be in a condition for allowance. The Applicant, therefore, respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw all rejections and issue a Notice of Allowance for all pending claims.

The Applicant requests a telephonic interview if the Examiner has any questions or requires any additional information that would further or expedite the prosecution of the Application.

Respectfully submitted,



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Amendment - PAGE 11 of 11
EUS/J/P/04-8748